

**281—24.4 (260C) Accreditation components and criteria—Higher Learning Commission.** In order to be accredited by the state board of education and maintain accreditation status, a community college must meet the accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission and additional state standards. Accreditation shall be maintained either by the Program to Evaluate Academic Quality (PEAQ) or the alternative Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) process. The Higher Learning Commission criteria for accreditation are as follows:

**24.4(1) *Mission and integrity.*** The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

*a.* The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

*b.* In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

*c.* Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

*d.* The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

*e.* The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

**24.4(2) *Preparing for the future.*** The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

*a.* The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

*b.* The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening the program's quality in the future.

*c.* The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

*d.* All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing the organization's capacity to fulfill that mission.

**24.4(3) *Student learning and effective teaching.*** The organization provides evidence of student learning and effective teaching that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

*a.* The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

*b.* The organization values and supports effective teaching.

*c.* The organization creates effective learning environments.

*d.* The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

**24.4(4) *Acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.*** The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

*a.* The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

*b.* The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

*c.* The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

*d.* The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

**24.4(5) *Engagement and service.*** As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

*a.* The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

*b.* The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

*c.* The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on the organization for service.

*d.* Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

**24.4(6) *Documentation.*** Documents and materials provided in accordance with the accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission shall also be provided to the department for the state accreditation process.

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